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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 49/195 of 23 December 1994 on strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, the General Assembly:

"...

"Taking into account also the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the mandate for the post, including its coordinating role and its overall supervision of the Centre, as well as the request by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/141 for appropriate staff and resources to enable the High Commissioner to fulfil his mandate,

"...

"Noting that in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the World Conference on Human Rights stressed the importance of strengthening the Centre for Human Rights,

"Noting also that the difficult financial situation of the Centre has created considerable obstacles to the implementation of the various procedures and mechanisms and has negatively influenced the servicing by the Secretariat of the bodies concerned,

"...

"2. Requests the Secretary-General and Member States to ensure that appropriate additional financial, material and personnel resources are provided in 1994-1995 from within the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to enable the Centre and the High Commissioner to carry out, in full and on time the respective mandates assigned to them by the competent bodies dealing with human rights;

"3. Calls upon the Secretary-General to include in his submission for the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, giving due regard to development and other priority activities of the United Nations, human and financial resources for United Nations human rights activities, adequate to respond to the increase in mandated activities in order to enable the Centre and the High Commissioner to carry out their respective mandates efficiently and effectively;

"4. Requests the Secretary-General to make available additional human and financial resources (a) to the High Commissioner so as to enhance his ability to coordinate effectively human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system, including the provision of advisory services and technical assistance; (b) to the Centre so as to strengthen its ability to discharge all its mandates, as well as its ability to deal with administrative and budgetary matters, including the provision of advisory services; (c) to the High Commissioner and the Centre so as to enhance their ability to carry out mandated operational activities and to coordinate efficiently with other relevant parts of the United Nations system on logistical and administrative questions;

"...

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit an interim report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session and a final report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on the strengthening of the Centre and on the measures taken to implement the present resolution."

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

3. In connection with the establishment of the post of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the Secretary-General submitted a statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/61), indicating that, while the High Commissioner would draw on the resources of the Centre to fulfil his tasks, a number of additional posts (one Under-Secretary-General, two P-5 and three General Service posts) and operational funds would be required, totalling $1,471,400. The General Assembly did not approve these posts at its forty-eighth session. Instead, it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments of up to US$ 1,471,400 and, in connection with the establishment of the office of the High Commissioner, decided to consider at its resumed forty-eighth session such additional appropriation as might be necessary, not to exceed $1,471,400. At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of this question to its forty-ninth session. The Secretary-General, in his report (A/C.5/49/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, proposed, on the basis of experience, that instead of the six above-mentioned posts nine posts be provided for the High Commissioner and his office (one

Under-Secretary-General, two P-5, one P-4 and three General Service for Geneva and one D-1 and one General Service post for the New York office). The Secretary-General indicated in that report that it was estimated that the revised requirements of the High Commissioner, as defined above, could be met from within the balance of the amount for which the Secretary-General was authorized to enter into commitment, i.e., $1,471,400.

4. Regarding the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action, endorsed by resolution 48/121 of the General Assembly, it will be recalled that in the related statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/48/46), the Secretary-General indicated that one P-5, one P-4 and two General Service posts would be required, as well as operational funds totalling $1,167,500. The General Assembly did not approve these posts at its forty-eighth session. Instead it authorized the Secretary-General to enter into all the commitments necessary within the above amount in respect of the full implementation of the activities envisaged in the resolution and decided to consider such additional appropriation as might be necessary and not to exceed $1,167,500 at its resumed forty-eighth session. At that session, the Assembly decided to defer consideration of the question to its forty-ninth session. The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly requested the appropriation of the amount of $1,167,500.

5. Concerning the continuing United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session did not appropriate the additional resources of $1,834,100 requested by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/48/78). Instead, the Assembly took note of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in its report (A/48/7/Add.12) and authorized the Secretary-General to enter into additional commitments up to $1,834,100 under section 21 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for the financing of human rights activities in Cambodia. The Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/53) to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly requested the appropriation of $1,834,100 for that purpose.

6. In summary, in his report to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly (A/C.5/49/53) the Secretary-General requested an appropriation of $4,473,000 under section 21 of the programme budget for 1994-1995, representing the level of resources for which commitment authority had initially been extended in respect of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the continued human rights presence in Cambodia.

7. The General Assembly, at its forty-ninth session, decided to appropriate, on an exceptional basis, $4,473,000 under section 21, Human rights, on the understanding that the posts requested by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.5/49/53) for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Centre for Human Rights and the human rights office in Cambodia were approved on a temporary basis, that all posts shall be subject to a detailed review by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly at the earliest opportunity at the resumed forty-ninth session.

8. The Secretary-General, in his proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/50/6/Rev.1) under section 21, Human rights, requested (a) the establishment of a new P-5 post to strengthen the administrative function of the Centre; (b) the establishment of a new P-3 post to assist the High Commissioner; (c) the conversion of the 21 temporary regular budget posts approved for 1994-1995 to the category of established regular budget posts (including the Under-Secretary-General post of the High Commissioner, four Professional and four General Service posts for the High Commissioner's Office, two Professional and two General Service posts for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and eight Professional posts for the Cambodia field office); and (d) the redeployment and downgrading of a D-2 post from Executive Direction and Management to the D-1 level to head the International Instruments Branch of the Centre for Human Rights.

9. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which considered the proposed programme budget of the Secretary-General for the biennium 1996-1997 in August 1995, concluded that with the exception of the Under-Secretary-General post of the High Commissioner, one P-5 and two General Service posts in the Office of the High Commissioner, the decision to convert the remaining 17 temporary posts, approved in 1994-1995, into established posts in 1996-1997 should be deferred until the restructuring of the programme of work of the Centre and the identification of priorities were completed. With regard to the proposal for two new established posts in 1996-1997, the Committee did not agree with the establishment of the new P-3 post in the Office of the High Commissioner, but recommended the establishment of the new P-5 post to discharge all the functions of an administrative executive officer of the Centre.